

DDJC Spreads Lean

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

Lean thinking, tools and principals have migrated from the Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC) Freight Terminal and Consolidation and Containerization Point (CCP) to Warehouse 20. Starting in early 2005, warehouse personnel started mapping out every move they made in two areas: receiving trucks and packing items for shipment.

Lean is a continuous process improvement tool that enables DDJC to change processes in order to do more with less—less human effort, less equipment, less time and less space—while coming closer to providing customers with exactly what they want when they want it. Lean is customer-driven excellence.

“We rearranged the processes using fewer steps, reducing distances forklifts traveled, and moving equipment and tools closer to where the work is done,” said DDJC Warehouse Supervisor Rick Festa. “It has made the process much simpler.”

After three Lean training sessions, changes became evident. There is constant communication among the teammates. Work is becoming standardized, the worker is more involved in the process, there is more initiative demonstrated, and the culture is improving.

“The attitude is a lot better,” said Leo Vangrieken, a DDJC Warehouse 20 Materials Handler. “With our input, we reach consensus as a group.”

The 12-member Lean team led by Shad Winter taught Warehouse 20 personnel a four-step process: plan, do, study and act.

The team has also identified five other warehouses for teaching Lean principles.

According to Lean team member Joyce Uhl, training starts with a 90-day implementation phase that consists of hands-on training, expanded use of visual tools, and the importance of communication. They also help the warehouse personnel collect data which provides the facts needed to make process changes.

“Lean is a business philosophy that allows us to put a system in place to emphasize the prevention of waste and its elimination,”

says Lean team member Cora Guthrie. “It provides us with several tools, techniques and methods that will drive our agency toward the goal of excellence in areas such as customer focus, respect for people and continuous process improvement.”

DDJC Commander, COL Doug Serrano, USA, opened up the Warehouse 20 Lean kick-off with a motivational message about employee empowerment and process improvement. He also talked about concentrating on all customers including employees in other internal divisions in addition to the Warfighters.



Evelyne Lee stacks items on a pallet, while David Padilla looks on in Whse 20 as Lean implementation started in early February.

Turning the Summertime Blues into Summertime Cools

Summer in Florida is very hot, and the humidity is extremely high. Warehouses anywhere can smell musty with not enough air circulation. To improve the working environment for the employees and reduce the chances of heat stroke and dehydration, Defense Distribution Depot Jacksonville, FL (DDJF) purchased 62 high velocity fans and one portable evaporative spot cooler. The fans, manufactured by Patterson Fans, provide a six to ten degree temperature difference in areas where the fans are mounted, which will help keep the personnel's core body temperature down.

The evaporative spot cooler can reduce the air temperature by 15 to 18 degrees. The evaporative spot cooler can hold up to 24 gallons of water to cover hours of operation and ice can be added to bring the temperature down even more.

Air circulation from the fans can be felt up to 45 feet away. DDJF had fans hardwired and installed an on/off switch for easy control. Fans are 110/115 volts, so they can be plugged into any electrical receptacle.

“We have a great Safety Team at DDJF,” said CDR James Smart, SC, USN, Commander, DDJF. “Our Safety Officer, A.J. Hall, came up with the idea and researched different alternatives and the results are excellent.”

Historically DDJF used large, floor standing box fans to try and cool the working areas. However they get in the way of forklift operations, which can be a safety concern, and must be moved around with the work to keep people cool. Because they are large and cumbersome there was a tendency not to use them at all.

DDJF has now gone to a system of column and ceiling-mounted fans that direct the flow of air to employee workstations. The company, Patterson Fans, did a workstation and air flow analysis and made recommendations regarding the correct quantity and placement of the fans for maximum cooling effect.

All the employees are pleased and there is a major difference in cooling at work centers.



DDJF purchased 62 high velocity fans (above) and one portable evaporative spot cooler (below).

